



King County

# KING COUNTY BIODIVERSITY REPORT | 2008



ENHANCING URBAN NATURE THROUGH A GLOBAL NETWORK OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS





The Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Project is a 3 year project which was initiated by the City of Cape Town, supported by the eThekweni Municipality (Durban), and developed in conjunction with ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and partners. ICLEI is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations that have made a commitment to sustainable development. LAB is a project within ICLEI's biodiversity programme, which aims to assist local governments in their efforts to conserve and sustainably manage biodiversity.

Local Action for Biodiversity involves a select number of cities worldwide and focuses on exploring the best ways for local governments to engage in urban biodiversity conservation, enhancement, utilisation and management. The Project aims to facilitate understanding, communication and support among decision-makers, citizens and other stakeholders regarding urban biodiversity issues and the need for local action. It emphasises integration of biodiversity considerations into planning and decision-making processes. Some of the specific goals of the Project include demonstrating best practice urban biodiversity management; provision of documentation and development of biodiversity management and implementation tools; sourcing funding from national and international agencies for biodiversity-related development projects; and increasing global awareness of the importance of biodiversity at the local level.

The Local Action for Biodiversity Project is hosted within the ICLEI Africa Secretariat at the City of Cape Town, South Africa and partners with ICLEI, IUCN, Countdown 2010, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), and RomaNatura. For more information, please visit [www.iclei.org/lab](http://www.iclei.org/lab)

# FOREWORD



As King County Executive, I am pleased to present this report describing the breadth of the county's biodiversity and our efforts to conserve our native ecosystems, habitats, and species. Our conservation efforts are no small tasks in so large and varied an area, and they are made more difficult by our rising population and new threats from climate change. Nevertheless, I believe we are taking important and significant steps to safeguard and reclaim much of this natural heritage. Our work in the conservation of Pacific Salmon through the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound and the Puget Sound Partnership are examples of our commitment to this heritage. I am confident we will continue on this pathway by enlarging our commitment and redoubling our efforts for conservation. Our participation in the Local Action for Biodiversity Project provides us with common cause and renewed purpose for this important work. We will learn much from others and, in turn, hopefully share our unique perspectives as well.

Citizens of King County live and work among a diverse and varied native landscape of high mountain peaks, rolling foothills and broad river valleys, coastal beaches and open waters of Puget Sound. That we share this landscape with an astonishing variety of habitats and creatures is not lost to us. We find in our citizens an enduring dedication to the protection and restoration of the habitats, plants, and animals that we have historically often ignored in our rush to civilize the Pacific Northwest. This dedication is evident in the pages of this report as well.

We have done our best to describe the range of biodiversity in King County. We have strived to provide readers of this report with a true and honest assessment of the condition of our habitats and species, and of our efforts—sometimes small, sometimes grand, always optimistic—to conserve the astonishing array of life that occupies this region with us. We trust this report will illuminate this abundance and diversity and provide us and our LAB partners with a greater commitment to conservation of biodiversity worldwide.

To that end, we especially look forward to collaborating with other LAB cities in this great effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Sims".

Ron Sims  
King County Executive

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# PREFACE

This document forms part of a set of biodiversity reports produced by participant cities of the Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB) Project. It represents a critical starting point: a status quo assessment of biodiversity and its management in each LAB city.

Each biodiversity report covers four key themes\*, namely:

- Ecology
- Governance
- Integration
- Participation

Each biodiversity report will be drawn upon to contribute significant and useful information for the compilation, by the LAB Project Team, of a Biodiversity Toolkit document. This document will contain best practice theory and examples, principles, strategies etc. for use by cities to better manage and integrate biodiversity into planning. The Toolkit will in turn contribute towards further steps in the LAB process.

The five steps in the LAB process are as follows:

- Step 1: Development of a biodiversity report that documents the current state of biodiversity and its management within each city
- Step 2: Ensuring long-term commitment by city leadership to sustainable biodiversity management through LAB cities formally signing a local government biodiversity declaration
- Step 3: Development of a 10-year biodiversity action plan and framework that will include commitments to biodiversity implementation plans and integration within broader city plans
- Step 4: LAB cities' formal acceptance of their 10-year biodiversity action plans and frameworks
- Step 5: Implementation of five new on-the-ground biodiversity interventions by the end of the three-year project

These reports create a unique opportunity for profiling the importance of urban biodiversity, and innovation in its management, on a global scale. They are the foundation not only of the long-term plans that each city will develop to enhance, protect and develop their urban biodiversity, but also collectively form the basis for the development of LAB as a highly effective global urban biodiversity initiative.

LAB Project Team  
May 2007  
Cape Town